

4.12.07 - Rahall To Introduce U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez At Huntington Chamber Dinner

HUNTINGTON, WV - U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall will serve as a special guest tonight the 116th annual Huntington Regional Chamber of Commerce dinner, where he will introduce U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, the keynote speaker.

The dinner follows a trip by Rahall and Gutierrez to the Mingo County fish hatchery, during which Gutierrez saw first-hand how Arctic Char fish - a cold water species with significant market potential - and other fish are farmed for commercial use. He witnessed the step-by-step process the fishery uses for incubating eggs, utilizing hatching trays and then a six-foot swim-up pond. Once sufficient in size, the fingerlings are then transported to a nearby grow-out farm and then to a processing facility in Logan County.

"I am honored that Secretary Gutierrez accepted my invitation to come to southern West Virginia to see all of the great things we are doing to further business opportunities and improve our economic fortunes," Rahall said.

Rahall's remarks for to be delivered at the Huntington Chamber of Commerce dinner follow. Embargoed until time of delivery.

Remarks of U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall

Huntington Chamber of Commerce-Introduction of Secy. Gutierrez

Huntington, West Virginia

7 PM, Thursday, April 26, 2007

Good evening, everyone. I'd like to welcome you to the 116th annual Chamber of Commerce Dinner. That's 42,300 days, give or take, of working hard to strengthen, enhance and protect our businesses, and the jobs they provide.

This Chamber not only has a long tradition, but also a broad one. Our speaker tonight probably relishes Huntington's interest in global trade. He would embrace the ongoing efforts of Marshall University to reach out to the world marketplace, not only for students, but also faculty, not only for exporting research -- but also for importing ideas.

We should count ourselves very fortunate to have the opportunity to hear our speaker tonight. In the last few months alone, he has spoken to the American Chambers of Commerce in Egypt, New Delhi, Mexico City, Seoul, Shanghai, Moscow, and now of course - Huntington.

We will hear a special perspective tonight from a captain of industry, turned statesman of commerce. Never let it be said that the members of the Huntington Chamber don't appreciate the role of government in their businesses. Like Lincoln said, government should play a role in the economy, when the private sector can't.

This is a true reflection of the mission of the U.S. Department of Commerce. From the Economic Development Administration, which helped many local projects-- to the International Trade Administration, which works hand in hand with American Businesses here and abroad.

Our speaker tonight and I were both businessmen. We understand that capital investment is to our business climate what water and sun are to a good harvest. It is essential. And we know federal investments pay off.

You probably read in the Herald-Dispatch earlier this week that Pullman Square is now the 'Huntington Hotspot.'

Pullman started with the \$27 million federal dollar investment I steered there. Rahall Transportation Institute at Marshall,

our \$28 million dollar federal investment, marked a milestone recently with the University's first ever royalty check for a new safety lighting technology, a true return for the public good.

\$90 million for the Heartland Corridor is clearing rail tunnels to double stacked containers and is funding an intermodal facility at Prichard -- a magnet for business interests.

We must harness the potential of the Ohio River. The Port of Huntington can be our economic catalyst of the century. But at this moment, no governing body helps steer the river's development. I want a Tri-State commission composed of members from each state to develop and implement a shared mission.

Finally, telecommunications / broadband access has to be made available throughout West Virginia. I am continuing to work with Velocity Center at Kinetic Park, HADCO and MU on distance learning for southern WV.

Thanks for that commercial. But these examples illustrate, I think, the proper role of the federal government - partnering with states and cities to build business and create jobs. I liked the headline in the paper yesterday, "Huntington gets positive business ranking," from Forbes, but we still have work to do.

Our speaker Secretary Carlos Gutierrez understands this clearly.

We might come from different political parties, but the Secretary and I have a lot in common. Our families both came to this country pursuing the American Dream -- he and his parents from Cuba, my grandparents from Lebanon.

He has a son, Carlos Jr. and two beautiful daughters; I have a son, Nick Jr., and two beautiful daughters.

We both worked our way up from the bottom rung. His first job at Kellogg was truck operator. My first job on Capitol Hill was elevator operator.

He delivered Frosted Flakes. I rode with a few flakes myself from time to time.

I was elected as the youngest member of Congress in 1977, and in 1999 the Secretary became the youngest President and CEO of Kellogg in its hundred year history.

Secretary Gutierrez oversees a diverse Cabinet agency with a \$6.5 billion dollar budget. As chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, I oversee three quarters of a billion acres of federal land.

The Secretary believes we need to decrease our dependence on foreign oil and that we can do this through alternative fuels. I agree. And I know the answer lies in coal.

But above all, we have a shared interest in helping West Virginia reach its potential. Federal investment is changing the face of our area. The proof is in the pudding.

Since 2000, the US EDA alone has distributed \$22 million in funds to the Third District.

And it's saved or created an estimated 3,723 jobs.

Tonight's invitation to the Secretary came about through a visit from the Secretary to my office in Washington several months back. I knew he was a good guy when he brought with him news of a \$900,000 grant for Southern West Virginia.

I think you will appreciate his message equally as much. Thank Secretary Gutierrez for your investment in our state and for visiting Huntington today.

Without further adieu, Secretary Carlos Gutierrez.